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In and Around Split. Economy, Space and Contemporary Croatian Novel[1, 2]

Over the last twenty years, we have witnessed in the Croatian literary science the appearance of the so-called spatial turn which is characterized by the study of space as a dynamic dimension of literary texts, which are always partially imagined, but on the other hand, their mimetism speaks of the complex connection between inscribing human action into space and its labeling, and of the influence of space on literary protagonists. In the light of the spatial turn, a whole series of studies that thematize the urban universes of Zagreb, Dubrovnik, Paris, London, Berlin, Rijeka emerged in the prominent works of Croatian writers. In this paper, the focus of my observation will encompass the images of Split and its surroundings in several contemporary novels. Split has a prominent role in the cultural images of the 20th century. I will give a brief overview of the dominant images: Split as the city of Diocletian's Palace and Gregory of Nin, Split from an operetta and a postcard, Split as the city of farmers, Split as a devil's island and a problem city. In contemporary literary texts, from the transition to the present day, we will see a dramatic rift between the apocalyptic image of the city of favelas and the architectural chaos in the transition, and the image of a fashionable desirable tourist destination that has dominated the last decade. In parallel, I will observe the imagination of the Split surroundings and suburbs, which seem to remain the unwanted Other. The following novels will be analyzed: *Adio, kauboju* /*Adios, Cowboy*/ and *Pjevač u noći* /*Singer in the Night*/, by Olja Savičević Ivančević, *Ovce od gipsa* /*Plaster Sheep*/ by Jurica Pavičić, and *Južina* /*South Wind Blues*/ by Nebojša Lujanović. This article will explore how the transformation of space, in above-mentioned novels, is indispensably linked to literary imaginations of the metamorphoses of capitalism in Croatian society and culture from the war and transition to the involvement in global tourism.

Keywords: contemporary Croatian novel, images of Split, space, economy

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1.

The representation of cities and urban identities in transitional and contemporary Croatian prose has been systematically studied in Croatian literary science (as evidenced by studies e.g., Nemec 2010, Kolanović 2011, Koroman 2018). Most of these studies focus primarily on the urban identity of Zagreb in the post-war, post-socialist, unstable and volatile period of deep social and economic transformation, which, surely, stems from the fact that most contemporary urban prose production is concentrated on Zagreb. What would we discover if we were to focus the commitment to this issue on the image articulation of a city which was somewhat in the background of the interests of contemporary Croatian urban prose? Of course, we are talking about Split. This city certainly has a prominent place in the collective cultural memory and is undoubtedly an urban structure associated with very intense images in popular, media, and everyday culture.

As the above authors noted, the urban transitional prose, on the one hand, via paradigmatic urban spaces such as cafes, inns, shopping centers, and a neighborhood with apartment buildings that speak of the class status of the heroes, displays profound economic and social changes, and on the other, thematizes urban identities in the gap between popular and consumer culture, and the possibilities of resistance to capitalist and consumer rituals (Nemec 2010: 231–234, Kolanović 2011: 343–361, Koroman 2018: 241–248). The urban lifestyle, which sometimes bears the characteristics of cultural elitism, enjoys a privileged position, and is sometimes self-ironizing, while non-urban ones are often parodied, caricatured images of otherness (Koroman 2018: 135–136), articulated through identity labels such as yokels, dinarides, Herzegovinians, thieves, HDZ party members, rightists, etc.

To further develop the arguments of the paper, it will be particularly useful to make a certain deconstruction of the urban identity privilege by linking its meaning with the periphery, and no longer the center, in transitional prose, (cf. Kolanović 2008). This insight will be followed by the construction of the characters' and/or narrator's identity, which grows out of the specific interpretation of the urban (ibid: 86), class, and cultural matrix (cf. Koroman 2020, Gajin 2020). Following Kolanović's postulates about the decentralization of the urban to the margins, the hyper-significance of the non-center, the periphery, the suburbs, the suburban, and the representation of the city center as a semantically empty center in transitional prose (Kolanović 2008: 74), I will explore the way the image of Split is being created in analyzed novels, whether or not it follows the above-mentioned logic, and whether or not there has been a change and a development of said problems in little over 20 years, the period during which these novels were published. A particular interest of this paper lies in the way the city's image is firstly associated with economic processes of the trauma of transitioning to capitalism, and later with the currents of the global economy, especially tourism, which in modern

times brings new transformations of space and the urban. Furthermore, the representational practices of narrators and characters are very important, which raises the question of their status, the position from which they speak, and whether they give privilege to certain images of the city in relation to others.

Additional insights into the literary articulations of the city and economic processes will be gained through an interdisciplinary comparison with research in other social and humanistic disciplines, mostly by introducing the spatial turn in the reading of contemporary Croatian prose. Space is not regarded as an empty vessel in which narration takes place, but as dynamic, semantically charged, and socially produced, as seen in the insights of spatial turn theorists such as Henri Lefebvre, David Harvey, and Edward Soja. Space is not only shaped and marked by subjects, but it also has a reciprocal effect on them, influencing the conditions of their jobs, leisure, lifestyle, while creating or destroying social communities. Space, especially from a tourism practice standpoint, is becoming a source of profit, a place of consumption, a source of identity, and even a litmus paper of a wider, global social change.

Not only are cities changing right before our eyes under the imperative of economic development, but the spatial transformation is also becoming an important topic in our contemporary prose works, as well as an important problem hub of contemporary Croatian literary science.

2.

When we talk about the media and cultural images of Split, we can undoubtedly conclude that, in the Croatian context, Split is placed in a relationship of binary opposition to Zagreb. It is possible to state that Split occupies the position of Otherness, today in relation to Zagreb, once in relation to Venice (cf. Pletenac 2007). If we carry out a more detailed analysis of that Otherness, we come across two dominant images: one represents a city of great historical beauty, but also a city of popular music, sports, fashion, and beauty, and the other one represents Split as a problem city. As Renata Jambrešić-Kirin says: "What makes this city, unlike, say, Rijeka, Osijek, or Karlovac, a city of 'unprecedented media attractiveness' (Lalić), are not only its problems, scandals, the enigmatic future of the urban Sphinx, but also its attempts at literary, journalistic, film and subcultural self-portraits and self-understanding, the same ones that slowed down the 'brain drain' to the capital." (2007).

We encounter such a duality of the image of Split if we go deeper into the past, as well.

Split has always inspired numerous travelers, writers, and artists who have left behind numerous printed testimonies about it. A large number of these testimonies are gathered in the book *Eternal Split* (1985), written by Anatolij Kudrjavcev. Kudrjavcev

points out that two images of Split are dominant in these otherwise heterogeneous records. One is a postcard panorama, an idealized image of paradigmatic city views – "romance with an operetta ambiance, scenery and theatrical lighting" (Kudrjavcev 1985: 122); it is an exterior, striking image of Split that was enthusiastically and cheerfully written about (ibid: 119).

The second, much rarer, is peeking behind the scenes (ibid: 119), which brings a feeling of anxiety and vagueness. These authors usually described the Get and Veli Varoš neighborhoods, as hellish labyrinths of dirty, dark, and narrow streets without lighting or air, filled with lying drunken laborers and workers, a hotbed of fornication, immorality, crime, dirt, vice, disease, prostitution (ibid: 168–170, 278, 325–331). Both of these macro images refer to the center of Split, which I emphasize, while having in mind that the images of modern novels move mainly outside the borders of the old town, to the suburbs and on the periphery.

But, at a closer look, one could make the assumption that the modern image of the problem city is just a continuation of that older, decades old story.

If we used postcolonial theory, like Tomislav Pletenac, and critically revised Fortis's theses, then we could argue that the North, personified as Zagreb, views Split as the actor of its pedagogical paradigm; the problem city in which the wild nature of the South can never be appeased in the civilizational project of the North (2007: 116). On the other hand, Split often idealizes Zagreb's rationality, tolerance and modernity (cf. Jambrešić-Kirin 2007; Pavičić 2018: 229). *Northerners'* images about passionate and emotional Dalmatians living an authentic, intense, and free life were often taken over and perpetuated by Dalmatians themselves, especially through popular pop music (Perinić 2007), and Ana Perinić's analysis brings the lyrics of these songs into a clear connection with the dominant patriarchal ideology (ibid: 110–112).

Such romanticized Mediterraneanisms in contemporary popular music actually deviate from the contemporary literary and media image of the city's life and the meaning it accumulates within itself.

The first significant media incorporation of the later widespread and established image of Split as a problematic, contradictory, and chaotic city, into the collective memory took place in the 1980s. In this context, it is particularly important to mention Darko Hudelist's article in *Start* magazine from 1988 in which he calls Split a devil's island, primarily because of the growing problem of drug addiction that culminated in the 1990s (Andrijašević and Lalić 2008: 418), but also, as Hudelist later explained, sees it as a Krležian metaphor for social problems in Yugoslavia just before its disintegration[3]. The war and the transition further reinforced this image, which got even more complicated by the war of cultures in the 1990s, between "civilized" local and "wild" new-

[3] https://www.slobodnadalmacija.hr/dalmacija/split/clanak/id/106271/split-je-vrazji-otok-hudelist-riva-je-ljepsa-ali-znjan-je-katastrofa Accessed 4 Feb 2020.

comers from the hinterland, which became a particularly popular topos in wider discussions on other Croatian urban areas, as well. The rise of tourism and the popularization of Split as a desirable destination for global tourists throws cultural differences into the background and introduces a new difference, the economic one: those who have caught the tuft of their tourist Caerus and those who have not. Does such a changed economic and social logic in relation to the 1990s and 2000s, and the establishment of a new tourist paradigm of the city find its reflection, interpretation and creative use in contemporary Croatian prose? Is the role of literary texts solely to represent changes in social reality, or does literature provide an opportunity for the creative transformation of meaning based on perceived social diagnosis? In the course of a more detailed study of these problems it will become apparent that texts closer to the present moment largely transcend the mimetic model of reality prose by playing with references to reality while creating a certain poetic and political response to reality.

I will observe the mentioned problem hubs of the relationship between Split and economy in contemporary Croatian novels in the corpus created from 1997 to 2018.

Several images can be clearly distinguished: the image of wartime Split in *Ovce od gipsa* by Jurica Pavičić, the transitional periphery of Split and the first tourist transformation of Split in *Adios, Cowboy* by Olja Savičević Ivančević, while *Singer in the Night* by Olja Savičević Ivančević and *Južina* by Nebojša Lujanović, on the other hand, evoke memories of Split as it no longer exists, which is primarily characterized by specific people and personal, but also generational experience of growing up (*Singer in the Night*) or by the modern battle for the city and its identity as it once was, which gets lost in the whirlpool of social turmoil, and whose most important exponents are outcasts, marginalized individuals, and fools (*Južina*). None of the above-mentioned images of Split is a sentimental postcard of the Quay, Diocletian's Palace, and Cathedral of St. Domnius, but a skewed perspective on the city from the margins, mostly spatial, but also from class, cultural, and even political minorities.

3.

After these introductory remarks, I will show how the mentioned topics, problems and relationships are articulated on examples from the analyzed novels.

Ovce od gipsa introduces readers to the war atmosphere of Split, in which war events and war actors play a dominant role. Since war is always a catalyst for a major social transformation, and in the Croatian case it coincided with great political and economic transformation, it is not unusual that the characters are strongly marked by specific political, class and cultural characteristics that are most often grouped around the axis of urban-non-urban dichotomy. Narrative consciousness, as well as characters who figure as predominantly positive, is related to the urban pole of the dichotomy. This has al-

ready been noticed as an essential feature of transitional prose: narrators and focalizers look at the world from the position of a middle-class citizen from which they create endogenous others (Koroman 2020: 199). As Koroman shows, there are several aspects of the identity of endogenous others, but for this paper "yokels", i.e., carriers of high economic and low cultural capital, are of a particular importance (ibid: 204). This type of identity, in contrast to which the dominant narrative and focalizing consciousness is formed, occurs in all observed novels. Since *Ovce od gipsa* belongs chronologically, considering the time of the action, at the beginning, in war time, when the elites, i.e., the winners of the transition have not yet been established, it can be noticed that these endogenous others are primarily associated with cultural and even biological differences, and to a lesser extent with differences in economic capital. Namely, it is evident that such characters carry a specific physiognomy, an ideological and ethical set of values, and that is the basis on which the narrator speculates that the unstructured war conditions are suitable for their future economic, social, and political rise:

"When he dissected his dislike of Vulas, a rural child with a rough accent, he always rebuked himself for the fact that it contained little urban racism. But he could often admit to himself with pleasure that Vulas was terrible, one of the kind of people to whom new opportunities and the war gave unimaginable wings." (Pavičić 1998: 20)

"Apart from being smarter, Grandma Šešelj looked like her grandson. She was agile, enterprising, and tangible, and as dishonorable as is considered a virtue during difficult times. She was like a bandit old woman: she lived in a pre-ethical state, ready like a beast to do anything to save her home and the benefit and skin of her family. Except for the first moment, there was no longer any desperation, disgust, nor moral reproach in her brain: her mind was working like an alarm-clock and it found a possible solution. He will call Matić." (ibid: 54)

The second group of this endogenous other, close to the former, consists of those who grew up on the periphery of Split, mostly in illegal settlements, and came most likely from the hinterland, and who, in terms of lifestyle, taste, and cultural capital, differ from "true" citizens of Split such as focalizer Krešo in the following quote:

"He didn't know or understand those others, the older ones, until he got dressed in his uniform. They were mostly not born in the city. They were family people with children and miserable salaries in the ironworks, shipyard or chemical industry. However, when the trucks brought them home after their shifts, they would not rush to their houses; instead, they would go to the city center to party and drink to their freedom, a small sweet benefit brought by the mobilization. When they heard Knopfler, they would say that he sounded like he had a toothache, and they would only occasionally go to the game, to the east stand, to be precise. They went out of town on Friday afternoons, ran small businesses, voted for the government, and listened to Mišo Kovač's music. They did not only listen to his music, Krešo used to joke, they were Mišo Kovač, they wore the same mustache, mesh undershirts, and probably a chain around their necks,

as well. Krešo did not understand them, but he knew that they didn't understand him or his friends, neither. For them, they were all 'druggies' because they rolled joints and went to the field wearing sunglasses. They, the young, called themselves unemployed, and the old called them layabouts. Krešo somehow felt that in the terrible hatred that boiled over Slave after that night in Stolovi, there was also hatred for 'druggies' with an earring in their ear and keys on their hips. Slave projected onto Krešo everything about these urban pricks that got on his nerves and blamed them all, collectively, in one body, for his brother's death: the death they caused because they were irresponsible and doped." (ibid: 82)

Krešo, in contrast to them, realizes the urban identity of a rocker sensibly close to Western popular culture, which is yet another characteristic identity articulation of transitional prose.

These other individuals live either in the vicinity of Split or in the eastern suburbs with illegal settlements, which Pavičić deals with a lot in his later books, as well, and most often calls them favelas.

"Around them stretched an illegal settlement, such a typical landscape for the eastern part of Split, which people from the western part see once or twice a year, when they go to the cheap tire fitter's or blockmason's. For kilometers around, illegally built and mostly unfinished family houses lined the streets. They were all alike: unplastered, with gray blocks, reinforcement bars protruding from the concrete roof slab, in case the owner decided to add a floor. Some of the yards were landscaped, some were not, but the access roads were all in mud and sludge, bordered by canals that carried the sewer pipes into the sea. If it was daytime, from the place where he was standing and swaying, Joško would have been able to see an inextricable labyrinth of telephone and electrical wires via which those houses that had legal telephones and electricity gave part of that boon to illegal dwellings for a reasonable fee. He would have seen water and sewer pipes absurdly protruding into the air or intersecting roads, barns with giant satellite dishes or four-story palaces built without permits, electricity or water, somewhere where someone may have long ago mapped out a road. Joško did not see a church or a building of the city district. He guessed he couldn't see either because the church had to be in some atomic shelter, and the district office in a container, like the ones where cheese pie and beer are sold. The whole landscape was dominated by an endless misery of the public and the social property, and the ugly, forced luxury of the private. He did not know exactly where he was, but he knew neighborhoods like this and everything was clear to him." (ibid: 36–37)

Unlike them, the *A new age* magazine editor Tomljenović is a representative of the established bourgeoisie, the middle class shaped in socialism, who has his own specific taste, rituals, and leisure, which is evident in the description of his apartment, and the above testifies to his great social and cultural capital which in transition becomes inversely proportional to the economic one:

"Nikša Tomljenović's apartment was a large and tidy two-story apartment in Table. That wasn't a glamorous neighborhood: it was built in the 1960s as a socialist periphery where one could easily buy an apartment on credit or get one from large companies. Over time, it became the city center and started to feel like a middle-class neighborhood. The buildings were not attractive; mostly four-story or five-story, they were built in a typical modernist geometric style, with narrow loggias and concrete flat roofs. Though neglected, the houses were not untidy; the stairwells were locked, the intercoms and lights on the staircase were not smashed, and the children in the yard were not bustling about between three and five in the afternoon.

New age editor's apartment was his reflection. It was a simple essence of the wealth and taste of socialist citizens in the 1970s and 1980s. It shone with purity, there wasn't much furniture, and it was massive, archaic, but not gaudy. A dozen paintings hung on the walls, a small but by no means tasteless collection of mainstream painters from local galleries: a few seascapes, a few abstractions, Trebotić, Jordan, and one smaller painting by Stančić as a highlight of the collection. And France watched from the walls: memories from Paris, several theatrical posters in French, an enlarged photograph with his wife on the Rive Gauche, and a journalistic society award for many years of reporting from Paris.

The library had a French taste, as well; there were some French classics – Hugo, Daudet, Stendhal, but even more newspapers, illustrated magazines, including fresh issues of *Paris Match* and *Liberation*. Books on economics were rare, older and Marxist – probably from college. Tomljenović had a small and not overly serious CD collection. The great vinyls were arranged in an exaggerated order that betrayed non-use: waltzes, Edith Piaf, chansonniers, Ravel, and opera evergreens." (ibid: 148)

A certain unenterprising moralism that is disgusted by the penetrating "illegals" (cf. Gajin 2020: 160–161) is most clearly manifested through the supporting character of Elvira's father, who at the end of socialism got an apartment from the railway company, on the 11th floor of a skyscraper in Sućidar. The elevated spatial position is in line with the elevated moral position that this character embodies in the face of war and transitional madness. He observes the world from his partially self-imposed isolation of a skyscraper apartment and acts as an authority which sees everything clearly and sharply, which almost hopelessly diagnoses social pathology, and functions as a figure of the heavenly judge, a bearer of the concept of justice. When it comes to class, it is a character who emerged from the matrix of socialist modernism and its narrative of progress, and who showed moral integrity in modern times – he did not convert or change his value system in the years to come. This is only the first of several examples in the observed novels in which socialist modernism is presented in a positive, emancipatory light. In one of the above-quoted fragments, by using the logic of the mechanism of establishing differences, the spatial distribution of peripheral illegal settlements is understood as a complete disregard for public and social goods. Therefore, Elvira's father

legitimately confirms through the semiotics of skyscrapers and railways the importance of social and communal infrastructure that ensures order and safety in a society:

"– I agree. I'm telling you; the moment people stop worrying about punctuality and order, this happens.

'This' was accompanied by waving his hand towards the window, and 'this' encompassed everything: both Chetniks and Ustashas, war and exile, poverty, corruption, and death.

– Then we're really fucked. The trains don't come late here: the tracks are cut, not a single one came in the last two years.

– That's what I'm saying. That's what I'm saying – said the old man, dipping his bread in a plate; he looked like a leader of a sect who has just gained a new member. He spoke as if all of that started to happen because of the timetable and empty, abandoned railway station somewhere in the distance, behind a window pane." (ibid: 101).

The motif of the highway (*magistrala*) and unattractive places along the highway is the central space in which the narrative world of the second analyzed novel, *Adios, cowboy* by Olja Savičević Ivančević, is located. But here, this unattractive suburb turns into a small universe unto itself, into a marked code in the worlds of popular culture and films. With evocation of the viewer's experience in watching westerns in the subtext, one gains a realistic insight into this kind of space at the moment of shooting a western, when foreign actors come to the Settlement and wonder if they have seen a more godforsaken place before. Historically, there is no doubt that the construction of the highway has significantly changed people's lives, in the economic and cultural sense. It enabled an easier and faster connection between northern and southern coastal towns, a greater mobility of the population, primarily workwise; it led to the development and strengthening of tourism, construction of hotels, apartments and cottages (*vikendice*) (cf. Taylor 2013). As Pavičić writes, for centuries, the youngest daughters inherited the least valued land right by the sea, but after the construction of the highway, it became the most attractive one and a source of capital (2018: 50).

The novel *Adios, cowboy* displays the unattractiveness of these fast-built settlements alongside the highway. As in the above-mentioned example, these descriptions have a double code: on the one hand, they are socially representative and mimetic, and on the other hand, they redefine the realistic spatial dimension through the characteristics of the western genre. The beginning of the novel brings a paradigmatic situation of the return of the main character (here: a heroine) to her birthplace, and the path to her birthplace is the highway, dusty, set between unplastered houses, "there is nothing green anywhere you look. Only dust and thorn bushes." (Savičević Ivančević 2010: 36), with wreaths laid for the dead, most often careless boys and young men:

"Every kilometer along the highway, there is a bouquet of plastic flowers in a plastic vase and a wooden cross, lamps, candles, even real marble tombstones with the faith-

fully engraved smiling faces of the deceased. A whole small town has bled to death on the road here. Every thirteen-year-old has a scooter cobbled together from spare parts. A traffic accident in our country is death by natural causes." (Savičević Ivančević 2010: 37).

The Old Settlement is to the east, east of the eastern periphery of Split, which Pavičić writes about, as well. The Wild West of a western here got its reflection of the east. The panoramic account from the west to the east gives us an image of the city in its touristic awakening, and the more the focus shifts to the east, the more the touristic glow fades. However, the Old Settlement, although currently unattractive for tourists, was a typical example of socialist tourism in the past, mainly through the business of the large Illyria hotel, a focal point of life in that place. After the war, landlords were forced to rent their apartments to guest construction workers because there were no tourists. Residents make ends meet in some kind of hopelessness of half-lawlessness and half-otherness in contrast to the tourist postcard of Split. The real endogenous others are the Iroquois, in the code of a western, an appropriate name for the inhabitants of remote villages in the hinterland of the Old Settlement. For many years, the spiritual climate was best outlined by graffiti at its entrance: *Stranger, the law does not protect you here*. However, in the new millennium, foreigners gradually began coming and buying old houses, which is a clear sign of the upcoming change in the economic and tourist paradigm. Such details don't serve us for depicting socially realistic persuasiveness, although it can be deduced from them; they serve us to provide Rusty's subjectively colored image of the key spaces that marked her life. Both Old Settlement and Split are spaces of symbolic or real non-freedom, where she does not feel comfortable, and which commit a kind of violence against her with their Mediterranean intrusiveness into the privacy and autonomy of the other. Therefore, the dominant image of Split is not the historic center, the beauty of the coast, or the elegant and trendy Split, but houses without sidings that rise up "in Tetris hills and hillocks at great speed" (ibid: 47), unfinished cubes with satellite antennae, concrete, and septic tanks. The common denominator of Rusty's relationship towards the Old Settlement and Split can be found in her sister's sentence: "Small places are good while you're small. Later they cut you down to their own size." (ibid: 102). As a counterbalance to nonfreedom, painful memories, and claustrophobia that these places evoke in Rusty, the author introduces Zagreb and Berlin. Zagreb is a city of missed opportunities, a city in which she "lived through several lost years" (ibid: 9), the most distant city, in which "you abandon your failed illusions" (ibid: 57). As a hope for a second chance for freedom figures Berlin, as a temporary, almost utopian refuge, as a place where she can perhaps forget what she leaves behind: a traumatic past and her brother's unfortunate fate, fused in Rusty's consciousness with the Old Settlement and Split. Proximity, involvement, and the impossibility of distancing oneself create an unhealthy relationship with the city; the conditions for a crush and perhaps even love are distance, alienation, and evoking astonishment:

"I observe the town as though it's unfamiliar, and the more success I have with looking through the eyes of an unknown man or woman, the more alien the town is to me – the more I like it. The more I like it, the less I care about it. And the other way around." (ibid: 200)

In this novel, the narrator speaks from the position of multiple otherness: from the gender, peripheral, and liberated from middle-class bias. Interestingly, in terms of class, her identity could rather be characterized as that of the working class, although class issues are not the focus of this novel. This class is not often the bearer of narrative or focalizing consciousness in our contemporary prose and is rarely portrayed outside idealization (Gajin 2020: 182–183) or somewhat exaggerated affectivity and lack of power (cf. Koroman 2020: 212). Therefore, the narrative voice and identity of this novel stands out with its perspective that avoids opinion patterns of the narrator and the characters that Koroman and Gajin write about.

The novel *Singer in the night* returns to Split as the fundamental object of the literary shaping of affections and emotions of the narrator and the characters. The dominant optics in articulating the space of Split is the poeticization and aestheticization of the physical and spiritual experience of living in that city. As a result, we see permeated images of present-day Split, whose center is a necropolis, full of tourists, and that other city, still unconquered by tourists, Split 3, Šimunović Street, as a privileged topos of the novel. Although the semantic potential of aestheticization, but also the one of resistance, is placed in this unconquered city, there are, too, visible signs of the relentless penetration of the tourist machinery on intercoms and facades decorated with touristic stars. This image of the contemporary tourist Split is juxtaposed with the memory of the Split of a young generation, of the novel's main characters', Clementine's and Nightingale's, growing up in the early 1990s. The essence of this disappearing city is Clementine's memory of her friendship with Helanka and Nightingale, who uncovered to her a parallel city, invisible at first glance, a certain heterotopia in the dark and the cruel Split of the wartime 1990s. The fundamental axis of difference between the three friends and the others is similar to the aforementioned pattern of transitional prose: urban identity versus "yokels".

"Great care is taken not to cross the border between the Valley of the FM and the Outland, where the yokels are, although no one strives for a different status here, on the Quay. The yokels don't give a damn about being yokels, they are in the majority and they have a good time. (...) There were days when I regretted that I wasn't a real purebred yokel, that their whole culture didn't bore me, (...)", but Clementine concludes that it would have come with a price because "there's no country where life's good for a yokel girl, only for yokel lads" (Savičević Ivančević 2016: 37–38), by which this novel continues using the gender-sensitizing voice of *Adios, cowboy*. This novel will then be established as multi-layered in the narrative articulation of Split, but also of a city in general. Attachments and the sense of belonging to the city for Clementine, Helanka,

and Nightingale are subject to change. As in *Adios, cowboy*, in this novel, the topos of Zagreb also appears as a space of escape from the excessive emotional intensity of living in Split (or around it). It is a space of emancipation from private discipline and space of Clementine's realization as an economic, goal-rational being, after the bitter-sweet experience of Split in the 1990s. By making money, she is being introduced to the charms of consumer culture, which at first seem like entering into new, unexplored spaces, but later, in retrospect, she writes them off as a delusion:

"I went off to Zagreb, saying I'd come back, that my interest in soaps wouldn't last a lifetime, that I was going just to earn some money, but I was lying, things opened up and I went from one thing to another, they were attractive, but bad, they were glamorous and hollow and fun. I was going somewhere, moving forwards and forwards was ever further away from Dinko Šimunović Street, from the marina and the boat and our story in which we had collected enough small coins for a pizza or a coffee. The new town sucked me into its enchanting spaces, into unexplored places (how soon all that would bore me)." (Savičević Ivančević 2016: 121–122).

Not only is Zagreb an escape from the claustrophobia of Split's private and public relations, but it also appears here as a topos of the embodiment of a newly formed capitalist society whose members are still full of trembling false hopes for a great, consumer paradise of well-being, prosperity, and social success, which is yet another typical theme of transitional prose (cf. Gajin 2020: 113–114).

On the other hand, this novel serves as a praise to the concrete Split of skyscrapers, these "concrete oases", as Clementine says, to the era of modernization, when Split turned into a modern urban structure, which Pavičić also writes about in his fiction and even more so in his non-fiction texts.

"It was a hot afternoon and the street was deserted, although little stars beside the intercom indicated that tourists had penetrated even into these concrete oases. Gale is right, it's the loveliest street in Split, a serious street, not a little street, lovely little streets are something else, there are lots of them, but I like big streets. And I like tall buildings and skyscrapers. And I like the twentieth century more than the nineteenth or the seventh. I'm not sure about the twenty-first yet" (Savičević Ivančević 2016: 15)

"Oh yes, Šimunović Street. Proof that tall buildings and skyscrapers can be attractive, that third Split, Split 3, Trstenik, my borough. Proof that socialism can be beautiful, as Gale would say." (ibid: 17)

The diagnosis of the tourist Split's present and future is evident, it happens in reality, before our eyes, and translates into literary texts. But can a literary text offer a different reading of the city, which requires a creative modification of meaning and reality? Can a literary text become a utopian text of urbanity and a blueprint of how reality should be changed over and over again? Is the greatest strength of a literary text as a political and social document always its aesthetic and ethical potential?

The guiding thread of the novel is that life is what constitutes cities as such. That is why today's tourist Split is a necropolis, as the narrator calls it. Modern tourism is inauthentic and is based on a strategy of staging authenticity (cf. Molvarec 2017: 338–340). The daily lives of the city's residents, who nurture a sense of belonging to the city, are moving to the edges. Therefore, the fundamental critical point of Nightingale's artistic resistance is anti-capitalist. The subordination of the city primarily to economic relations leads to its demise.

"Before the townsfolk move out, or perhaps at the same time, the towns will be taken over by tourist apartments, banks, business and shopping centres, expensive shops and pizzerias. Towns will become museums, many already are. Split too will become a museum, sweetheart. And a destination, in the summer for ordinary tourists, and in the winter for the inhabitants from both the poor and the wealthy suburbs. It will survive as a stage set, for celebrating feast days, festivals, fairs and pre-election rallies. (...) For Gale, his district and street are his chosen homeland, so his letters are probably a kind of homage to such a town, before he abandoned it, while the town still existed in its full strength – although its future could already be seen, I would say" (ibid: 68).

The semantic shift of this novel in relation to the transitional prose on the center-periphery axis is visible in the fact that although the neighborhood and the street are his homeland, for Nightingale, as the central figure of urban revaluation, they were chosen – let's not forget, he is of rural origin – but even more, they are the foundation for the poetic-political articulation of the resistance that the heroes of transitional prose mostly shaped around aimless walking through suburban space and idleness (Kolanović 2008: 86).

Dinko Šimunović Street, the modernist socialist building of Split 3, is becoming a metaphor for the poetic and aesthetic resistance to the extinction of the city through capitalist suction. The Marxist notion of capitalist exploitation through the image of a vampire finds its semantic opposite in Nightingale's project of bringing life back to abandoned cities through the Transfusion project, i.e., by reproducing, replicating Dinko Šimunović Street in abandoned urban spaces around the world:

"(...) and then he heard that Detroit was looking for artist-inhabitants and he came, because the man was known for the fact that he went round empty places out of which people had moved by force of various circumstances and planned to found Dinko Šimunović streets in several deserted towns all over the world, wherever it was possible, and to fill them with replicas of souvenirs, replicas of real life, and this project is called Transfusion, people circulate through the world like blood, everything else is anti-nature, (...)" (ibid: 138)

What makes that real life? A reconstruction of Nightingale's life in Dinko Šimunović Street with Clementine, the three years of their love. That apartment, at that address, was the heterotopia of a different life in the wartime Split in the 1990s. In other words, in a utopian manner, love is established as having the power to defeat great narratives convinced of their own invincibility, such as nationalism and capitalism in the novel. Such a life will germinate on the ruins of capitalism whether they have collapsed on

their own, as in the case of Detroit, or they are the result of a revolutionary action, which Nightingale advocates in one of his poems:

"What are you saying, be destroyed to their foundations?
Yes, yes, they should
There's no doubt
Burn banknotes
Fill the summer town
With the stench of petrol
With a wild fire in which what will vanish first
Are the index cards and old newspapers of your humiliation.
That flame will quickly devour
Our expendable blood (...)" (ibid: 81)

An eternal renewal of life in cities is possible only through connecting people. Therefore, Dinko Šimunović Street is not merely a personal story of Nightingale and Clementine, it is a triumph of the architectural vision of modernism that wanted to give people homes after they had lost their sense of belonging to villages they had left in the heat of the industrial revival, by which it again symbolically opposes determinism and mechanism of economic relations:

"They had to live somewhere, they had come to work here, there were jobs. I asked the architect who designed Dinko Šimunović Street about it. The architect told me that many people had accused him of having built dormitories in which no one dreamed, that he had made cold communities. That stung him, because he had wanted to make a real street, urban, with flats that would be homes, a street in which people would have to bump into each other. He said, the architect, that the district had been populated by empty people, they had come to the town, but had left everything they loved behind in their villages. A man without his loves is empty. He just waits to get his job done and escape for the weekend back to his home, to his loves, which are already former. That's why the architect, a sensitive and intelligent man, had designed a street in which people had to say good morning to each other, in which they could not pass each other in silence, a Mediterranean street of encounters, in which people really lived. But it was only partially successful, indeed it succeeded to quite a small extent. However, that dear, wise architect had forgotten one thing. In those buildings, in that street children grew up and it became their street for their whole lives. In it, whether they liked the street or not, all their future loves and convictions were conceived. Those buildings, those streets were the frame for the story of their lives. They went out into the street to meet and linger, they would sing about it or tell stories about it, just as I myself do, only all in different, our own, ways. [4] *"* (Savičević Ivančević 2016: 133–134)

[4] Italics are in the original text.

What is in *Singer in the Night* love and uniting people as the only utopian vision that can save the city, in *Južina* it is madness, a persistent deviation from what has been established as the norm in a society of disturbed values. But even in this novel persists a clear idea that the city is its people. In other words, what makes Split exceptional are its fools, and the modern politics and economy of the city do everything to sterilize, uniform, and anesthetize its idiosyncrasies. This could also be applied to the global urban level, but in *Južina* the situation is much blacker. The city is ruled by crime, corruption, and nepotism that push anyone outside their group to the margins. The main character of the novel is not part of their group, but he feels he doesn't belong anywhere, because he is a newcomer to the city, as he was a newcomer in several cities before Split. Therefore, from a marginal position, the dominant discourse of contemporary Croatian society, in general, is being re-examined, and madness and marginality are being established as the only authorities that offer the freedom necessary for resistance. Even those who are not part of the privileged circle of the corrupt sphere of city politics are passivated and pacified by being integrated into economic relations, primarily by participating in the production of tourist Split. These groups of people are semantically related to two images of Split: one is from a tourist postcard, in which the center is a staged inauthentic scenery, and Diocletian's Palace is compared to a tomb (similar as in *Singer in the Night*, where the tourist center is compared to a necropolis), and another one represents a city that, for millennia, has been a refuge for displaced persons and refugees of all kinds.

"Split, a refuge for the displaced. Now I understand. Only it could stand at the end of my exile. Coves, restaurants, souvenir shops. Not a word in the city guides about those who took refuge here. On the outside, the polished stone reflects the glow that pierces the cornea. From within, it retains the cries and sobs of the displaced people for centuries." (Lujanović 2019: 47)

4.

The starting points of this paper were several problem hubs, which have already been noticed in the analysis of transitional prose: the center-periphery relationship, the middle-class narrative identity, and the creation of endogenous others. On this basis, I wanted to study how the image of the city of Split develops in a contemporary novel with a special focus on macroeconomic processes that change the cartography and configuration of the city: the transition from socialism to capitalism and the rise of the global tourism industry.

There is no doubt that in all the observed novels the periphery, the suburbs outside the center carry a semantic surplus in relation to the semantically mostly empty center. There are two dominant images of the periphery: the suburbian – illegal settlements, favelas inhabited mainly by "yokels", "Outland", and neighborhoods grown in socialist modernization, which mainly signal the middle-class status of their inhabitants. If the

center of the city appears outside the meaning of a dead, empty center, then it is the center of alternative cartography inhabited by rebels, marginalized individuals, and lunatics. *(Singer in the night*, *Južina*).

Ovce od gipsa is an example of a novel which, in addition to the war theme, brings a dark picture of the initial phase of the Croatian transition in which the rearrangement of elites begins, more precisely, in which some groups have just stepped on the path of their economic, social and political rise. Therefore, in the novel, such characters are portrayed from a recognizable middle-class position as others who are culturally and psychogeographically different. It is about, as Ines Prica calls it, the ganga-territory of Croatian (European) identity (2011), a certain renewal of the "'bandit model' of political-social intervention in the Croatian transitional reality" (ibid: 44). According to her, *Herzegovinians* (sic!) embody the ambivalences of Croatia's economic transition, i.e., the hesitations about the social consequences and values of the whole process, "between entrepreneurship and social banditry" (ibid: 44–45).

The novels published closer to the present moment, primarily *Singer in the Night* and *Južina*, show the transformation and stratification of the city through the rise of tourism, and here, to a lesser extent, as culprits figure endogenous others and, to a greater extent, the invisible hand of capital. On the other hand, perhaps because of the dominant feeling of all-pervading power and the lack of specific "enemies", it is precisely in these two novels that the possibility of urban heterotopia, i.e., a kind of resistance through the possibilities of urban feeling structure and urban identity, is established. Since both modern tourism and capitalism, in general, have swallowed authenticity, the heroes of *Singer in the night* and *Južina* do not accept the trap of authenticity that strengthens their elevated positions of social judges through the ossification of their own and others' positions, but through the awareness of the performativity of identity and themselves, and the city, they shape one possible, parallel, reality and future.

"Theater. That's what it is. A theater city. Letters. Fools. Argument. Quay and fish market. All of that is one big theater. It's just a question of who manages it. We used to have good directors. And today? Amateurs. Vulgar and transparent, that's their style. I don't feel like acting in that play. It's some other city..." (Lujanović 2019: 169–170)

None of these novels cultivate a sentimental image of the past, but in each of them the past plays an important role, both when looking at the personal story of the characters and when talking about the city's identity. The individual and collective levels are, of course, connected, but if the focus of the analysis is primarily set on the latter, we can, in most of these novels, unmistakably recognize a certain belief in projects that advocate the concept of the public and common good and transcend straightforward and often short-sighted economic capitalist logic. As a result, the image of Split is multi-layered: it is a personal experience of space and the city, a more or less precise mimetic representation of social, economic, and political conditions of urban design, a polygon for poetic, ethical, or utopian revaluation and, finally, a space for constant identity performative, both individual and collective.

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U i oko Splita. Ekonomija, prostor i suvremeni hrvatski roman

Posljednjih dvadesetak godina svjedočimo i u hrvatskoj znanosti o književnosti tzv. prostornom obratu koji obilježava proučavanje prostora kao dinamične dimenzije književnih tekstova, koji su uvijek djelimice imaginirani, no s druge strane svojom mimetičnosti progovaraju o složenoj vezi upisivanja ljudskog djelovanja u prostor i njegova označavanja te djelovanju prostora na književne protagoniste. U svjetlu prostornog obrata, nastao je cijeli niz studija koje tematiziraju urbane univerzume Zagreba, Dubrovnika, Pariza, Londona, Berlina, Rijeke u istaknutim djelima hrvatskih književnika. Ovo će izlaganje razmotriti predodžbe Splita i splitske okolice u nekoliko suvremenih hrvatskih romana. U kulturnim predodžbama 20. stoljeća Split ima istaknutu ulogu. Dat će se kratak pregled dominantnih predodžbi: Split kao grad Dioklecijanove palače i Grgura Ninskog, Split iz operete i s razglednice, Split kao težački grad, Split kao vražji otok i grad slučaj. U suvremenim književnim tekstovima, od tranzicije do danas, uočit će se dramatičan rascjep između apokaliptične slike grada favela i arhitektonskog kaosa u tranziciji te slike pomodne poželjne turističke destinacije koja je dominantna posljednjih desetak godina. Paralelno, pratit će se imaginacija splitske okolice i periferije koja, čini se, ostaje neželjeno Drugo. Analizirat će se romani Olje Savičević Ivančević *Adio, kauboju* i *Pjevač u noći*, Jurice Pavičića *Ovce od gipsa* te Nebojše Lujanovića *Južina*. U navedenim romanima istražit će se kako je preobrazba prostora neizostavno vezana za književne imaginacije metamorfoza kapitalizma u hrvatskom društvu i kulturi od rata i tranzicije do uključenosti u tokove globalnog turizma.

Ključne riječi: suvremeni hrvatski roman, predodžbe Splita, prostor, ekonomija